

LFU01 – SOP Handling of Evidence for Friction Ridge Analysis

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1. Scope

- 1.1. This procedure is used to explain how evidence integrity of friction ridge evidence is maintained and how evidence is transferred within the Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU).

2. Background

- 2.1. All evidence transfers are documented in the DFS Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). The LIMS Chain of Custody record will document the location of all evidence associated with a case.
- 2.2. Evidence is received from multiple customers.

3. Safety

- 3.1. Read Safety Data Sheets to determine the safety hazards for chemicals and reagents used in the standard operating procedures.
- 3.2. Wear personal protective equipment (e.g., lab coat, gloves, mask, eye protection) only when carrying out standard operating procedures that results in exposure to chemicals or potentially infectious materials.

4. Materials Required

- 4.1. Evidence envelopes
- 4.2. Evidence tape

- 4.3. Evidence plastic bags
- 4.4. LIMS JusticeTrax software to document transfers

5. Standards and Controls

- 5.1. Not applicable

6. Calibration

- 6.1. Not applicable

7. Procedures

- 7.1. Latent fingerprint evidence is transferred to the unit by Central Evidence Unit (CEU) personnel. All information associated with the case is in the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).
- 7.2. The LFU Technician or designee will accept all items of evidence, unless a discrepancy is identified.
 - 7.2.1. Evidence will be transferred to a secure LFU storage location within the unit.
- 7.3. The Lead Scientist or designee will periodically assign requests to each case-working analyst.
- 7.4. The analyst will transfer the evidence associated with the requests assigned to them, from the storage room to their custody.
- 7.5. Evidence will be maintained in the analysts secure desk cabinet when it is not actively being worked.
 - 7.5.1. The LIMS record will show the evidence in the analyst's custody when it is secured in their cabinet.
- 7.6. Upon retrieving the evidence from the evidence storage room for analysis, the analyst will be responsible for observing the condition of the submitted evidence packaging to ensure integrity has been maintained. The following will be observed:
 - 7.6.1. Size, color, and type of packaging
 - 7.6.2. Condition of the evidence seal
 - 7.6.3. Notations, markings, or writing on the packaging

- 7.7. Upon opening the evidence packaging, the analyst will be responsible for inventorying the submitted evidence against the LIMS documentation to ensure there are no discrepancies.

7.7.1.1. If the evidence packaging is not intact or damaged, or there is a discrepancy with the documentation, then an *Evidence Discrepancy Form* must be filled out by the analyst. The Lead Scientist or designee will be notified, and a communication log added to the LIMS case record. The completed *Evidence Discrepancy Form* will be sent to the Lead Scientist or designee and the original will remain with the case file.

7.7.1.2. The Lead Scientist or designee will work to resolve the issue with the Central Evidence Unit (CEU) and/or the submitter of the evidence.

- 7.8. Upon the completion of the analytical work, the evidence will be sealed, and stored within the evidence storage area of the Latent Fingerprint Unit.

7.8.1. LFU typically maintains custody of all evidence received. Some customers/agencies may want their evidence returned. This will be documented in the LIMS Chain of Custody record.

- 7.9. There may be times when an official, usually an attorney or submitter, requests evidence to be transferred to another location for viewing or admittance into court property.

7.9.1. If analysts directly transfer evidence to an attorney, officer or another official, they must ensure that transfer is reflected in LIMS as soon as they return to the lab. The official can be added to the LIMS Agency Rep drop-down so they can be placed in the Chain of Custody record.

7.9.1.1. A communication log should also be added to the LIMS record explaining why the evidence was transferred to the official.

7.10.2. The analyst can also transfer the evidence back down to CEU for the official to pick up.

8. Sampling

- 8.1. Not applicable

9. Calculations

- 9.1. Not applicable

10. Uncertainty of Measurement

10.1. Not applicable

11. Limitations

11.1. Not applicable

12. Documentation

12.1. The following worksheet(s) shall be generated and managed:

12.1.1. Evidence Discrepancy Report, if applicable

13. References

13.1. Forensic Science Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual (Current Version).

13.2. FSL Departmental Operations Manuals (Current Versions).

13.3. FSL Laboratory Operations Manuals (Current Versions).